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ABSTRACT

During her lifetime Mary Ground, whose Indian name is Grass Woman, has experienced extreme changes in the life of Blackfeet Indians. Born in 1883, she remembers the travois and teepee days as well as the change to reservation life when the reservation was a fenced compound patrolled by the U.S. military. She has seen the decline in the use of Blackfeet language and ceremonies as well as the recent resurgence of interest in Native American rights and traditions. The 14 stories in this volume, told in her own words, are a blend of customs, folklore, and real-life events. Many of the tales reflect the culture from a woman's point of view. Two stories tell of marriage customs and the procedures surrounding the birth of a child. Other stories tell of magical events and contain elements closely parallel to certain fairy tales of European cultures. In one story a maiden lives in a beautiful land in the sky, but when she digs up a forbidden turnip she must then return to her people on the earth below. A Hansel and Gretel theme predominates another tale in which two abandoned children, a girl and a boy, are about to be eaten by a wicked old woman. Through trickery they manage to escape her and a magic buffalo carries them across a river to safety. In other magical experiences a man lights his pipe from the sun, and a coyote and a bear save the life of a wounded warrior. Other stories are true life stories of events in the tribe and on the reservation. (Author/DS)

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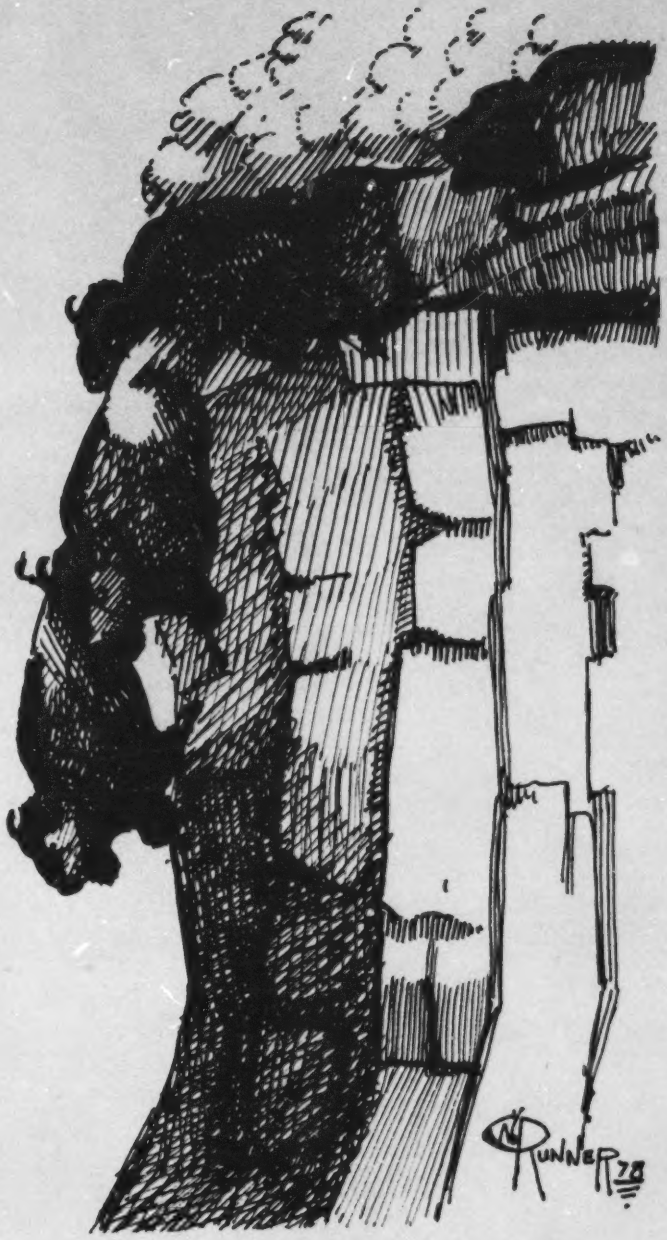

Buffalo Jump

GRASS WOMAN STORIES

By Mary Ground

Illustrated by Chuck No Runner

Blackfeet Heritage Program
Browning

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These stories were told to Cynthia Kipp, Mary Ground's granddaughter, who recorded them in many sessions during December, 1977 and January and February, 1978. The editor reviewed the transcriptions with Mary Ground and made additions and changes based on those meetings. Geraldine Weasel Fat transcribed the tapes and she, Maggie Henkle and Louise Evans translated the Blackfeet language portions of the tapes.

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Grass Woman Stories

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Dedicated to my family, my grandchildren
and great-grandchildren

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SCABBY ROBE, APIKUNIMA

I

SCABBY ROBE'S BIRTH

The Chiefs of the different bands of Pikuni would move their people away in small groups for a month or so in the fall. They would go near the mountains to camp and hunt while the animals were in their prime. After they'd gotten all of their hides and had all of their meat cured, enough to last the winter, they'd go back to the tribe. Then they'd go down and camp farther away from the mountains, along the Marias, maybe, down in the river bottom where it was sheltered. No one camped in those mountains in the winter. They were too cold and there was too much snow up there.

This Chief had gone to the mountains to hunt with his wife, who was expecting. They were traveling alone. Usually nobody stayed near the spring where they camped, because of the person, or monster, who lived there.

The husband went out hunting every day, so he warned his wife, "Someone will come along here from the west and holler out to you. He'll ask to come in and he'll ask directions. Whatever you do, don't look at him." He went off hunting.

The woman was busy with her meat, cutting it up and drying it. Pretty soon she heard a voice, it sounded far away, hollering, "Na'tskai, Na'tskai, can you tell me where I'm going? What road is this?"

She paid no attention. The voice kept coming closer and closer. Pretty soon it was right by her teepee. She sat there and didn't move. Finally she got up and went to the little hole those wooden pins make in the front of the teepee and she looked out.

Oh, he was an awful creature. He was dragging all of his guts, holding part of them up and getting the rest full of dirt. Yao! Whatever he was, he discovered her looking out and he went up and went into her teepee. He sat down by one side. She was scared to death

but she didn't want to act scared. She wanted to be brave. So the first thing she did was get a dish and offer him some pemmican to eat.

He told her, "No, that's not the kind of dish I use."

She gave him everything she had in the teepee to eat out of, even her husband's buckskin clothes.

He kept saying, "No, that's not the kind of dish."

Finally she asked him, "How about myself?"

He said, "Oh yes, that's the kind of dish I eat on."

So she lay down. He took the pemmican and laid it on top of her and when he started to cut, he cut her open. There were two little twin boys inside. He took the twin boys out and put one of them by those rocks that are piled around the fireplace and told him, "Your name is going to be Ash Boy, Esosksitsina."

He took the other boy and put him in the lining of the teepee and gave him the name Teepee Lining Boy, Eso'takskana. Then he got up and put a blanket on the woman and pulled out of there.

When the husband came back there was no sign of movement in his camp. "Oh!" he said, "I bet my wife looked at that man." When he went into the teepee she was lying there dead, covered up with a blanket. Oh, he felt bad. He stayed quiet for a long time and he kept hearing little children playing.

He wondered, 'Where could these little kids have come from?' When he went to get water from the spring he found a lot of little foot prints. 'Those might be my children,' he thought to himself. He went back home and studied how he could get hold of them. He knew they were around.

Finally he went into the brush and cut two bows and made four arrows, two for each of them. He fixed them up and went down to the creek where he'd seen the tiny foot prints. He put the arrows a certain distance apart and went back into the brush. When he'd

been hiding for a long time, those two little boys came out of the water. They looked alike. When they saw those arrows made just for them stuck along that bank, they went for them. Just as the second little boy grabbed the last arrow, his father grabbed him. The first boy jumped back in the water and got away. Oh, that second one wanted to get away too.

His father told him, "Lick my arm here, I'm your father." So the little fellow started to lick his arm.

He called to the other little fellow, "Come on back, come on. It's true. This is our dad. Lick his arm." The other little fellow came.

The man took them to his teepee and fed them. When they were finished he gave each of them a Bow and two Arrows and said to them, "We'll see what kind of Power you boys have. There's your mother; she's dead. Some horrible person came along and killed her." The first boy shot an Arrow into the air.

"All right!", he said to his mother, "Look out, look out, that Arrow's going to hit you!" She didn't move. He took the second Arrow and did the same thing, but she still didn't move. They had just two more.

The second boy took his first Arrow and shot it up in the air. With that third Arrow the blankets started to move. When he shot the fourth one, she sat up. She was alive.

They all lived together and the man took the boys hunting for rabbits and little birds. One day they were walking up along the creek.

Their father told them, "You can kill any bird that you see, except for one. It's an unusual color of green and it's an awful pretty bird. Don't try to shoot it."

The two boys went on up along the creek, hunting. The first thing they saw was that Green Bird sitting in a tree.

One of them said, "I'm going to shoot him."

His partner told him, "No, don't shoot him. Our Dad told us not to bother that one."

"Oh," said the boy, "I'll shoot him, just for the fun of it." So he shot and he hit the Bird with his arrow. It didn't fall, but it wasn't very high up from the ground, so the boy started to climb after it. That Green Bird just kept going higher and higher every time he got ready to touch it.

The other little fellow stood at the foot of the tree and called to his partner, "Are you coming back down?"

His brother said, "Yes, I'm just about to reach that Bird."

Pretty soon the other little fellow couldn't hear him answer any more, he was so high up in the tree. All his little clothes dropped off him and fell to the bottom of the tree. That Bird must have taken him up into the sky.

The little fellow who was left took his brother's clothes and wrapped himself up in them. He lay there and cried himself to sleep. From then on he was called Scabby Robe. He never went back to his family.

II

SCABBY ROBE'S MEDICINE

Scabby Robe wasn't exactly an orphan, after his twin brother died he left his folks. But after being knocked around from place to place he was just like an orphan. He wore a buffalo robe made of calf skins and the fur was peeling off so that it looked scabby. That's how he got his name.

Finally he came to an old lady and she took him in and fixed him all up and got him in good shape. He stayed with her for years and years.

One of the Chiefs had two wives. The younger one fell in love with Scabby Robe. He told her he'd be gone for a year and that he'd be back to pick her up.

One morning he got up early and went down to the river. He saw an Old Man there, all painted with red paint, wearing a white blanket. That Old Man told him, "Son, I've come after you." There were no camps around there at all, so Scabby Robe wondered where they were going.

The Old Man told him, "Close your eyes and don't open them until I tell you to look." So he closed his eyes for a long time and finally the Old Man told him, "Now you can look." When he opened his eyes he was in a Teepee.

That Old Man had taken him under the water. He was a Beaver Man. When Scabby Robe looked around he saw an Old Lady there too.

The Old Man told him, "All of our children are gone, there are just the two of us here. We've heard your voice and we often thought of trying to get you to stay with us for a while. When you want to go back to your people, we'll let you go back. We won't harm you."

So Scabby Robe told them, "All right." He stayed there nearly a year, living in the Beaver Teepee under the water. That Old Man taught him Songs.

When Scabby Robe was ready to go back, his Beaver Father told him, "Now my boy, I'll take you back to your people." All kinds of Medicine Bundles were tied to the poles of the Beaver Man's Teepee. Medicine Things were tied to every pole. He told Scabby Robe, "You see these Medicine Things tied to the poles. You can pick out any one that you want."

Way down by the door a little piece of Stick was tied with some Buckskin String. Scabby Robe told him, "I'd like that thing tied down by the door."

His Beaver Father told him, "My son, that's just a Stick." He said, "Why don't you look carefully at all these Bundles."

Scabby Robe asked him a second time, and a third time. The fourth time the Beaver Man said, "All right, you can take it." So he took the Stick with the Buckskin String. That little Stick represented the logs of the beavers' house. They chew those trees down for their houses. That's what Scabby Robe took.

His Beaver Father said, "I'm going to take you back. Just close your eyes." He closed them for quite a while until the Old Man said to him, "Now." When he looked, he was standing on the edge of a lake.

The Old Man bid him goodbye and said, "I'm going back now. I wish you luck. The first thing you will do is take a trip. You're going to win out." But he didn't tell him what it was about. Scabby Robe traveled and traveled and finally came back to his camp.

Oh, that girl was glad to see him. He had grown quite a bit and she had grown too. He stayed with the old lady, who was like his grandmother there. Soon he heard that his uncle was going on a war party.

He said to his grandmother, "Would you ask your daughters to fix some moccasins? I want to go with my uncle."

She told him, "My poor old Scabby Robe, you're such a poor-looking boy. How can you go on a raid?"

He still wore that little buffalo robe made of scabby looking calf skin.

The old lady said to her daughter, "Would you fix Scabby Robe three or four pairs of moccasins? He wants to go on a war raid with his uncle."

The girls said to him, "Why do you want to follow them? You'll get tired and you might get sick from traveling." But they made him a bunch of nice big moccasins anyhow.

He met his girl and told her, "I'm going on a war party with my uncle. I'll be back."

When his uncle and the party started out, Scabby Robe and his friend, another boy his age, let them go one day ahead and then they followed secretly. The next day when the party was going to rest, the leader saw his nephew and the other boy.

"Oh," he said, "You're crazy, you two boys. The best thing you can do is go right back home. You have no business following us, because you're going to get tired. You might get sick and cause a lot of trouble. You'll just be in our way."

Scabby Robe said, "Just let us go. We'll work for you and be your chore boys. If you need wood, we'll pack wood. Whatever you want done, all you have to do is ask us."

Finally his uncle said, "All right, you can come."

They'd been gone about four weeks when they came to a river. It was spring and that river was up bank to bank, foaming. Some Snake Indians were on the south side and the Pikuni were on the north side. They all stood there on the banks, watching each other. They couldn't do anything. They were scared to ford that river because it was so fast and deep, just booming from bank to bank.

Scabby Robe had a bow and a couple of arrows and that Stick from the Beaver's Lodge, with its Buckskin String. He always wore it around his neck.

He told his friend, "I'm going to kill that Snake Indian Chief." The Chief was a beautiful looking man with great long hair. Scabby Robe said, "Now when I shoot him and he goes down, when I grab him, I'm going to pretend to dive downstream. But I won't, I'll swim back up. Don't follow the crowd because the crowd is going to go down."

So Scabby Robe and that Snake Indian Chief started to walk and they walked into the river, toward each other. Scabby Robe sang,

I hope it's a good winter,
May there be good days
Our Maker who makes the days fine,
May we all get to a new winter,
Our Maker who makes all water animals,
Who makes all things possible.

When they were close to meeting, the Snake shot an arrow and hit Scabby Robe right in the middle of that Stick from the Beaver Lodge, where it was tied around his neck. That arrow didn't hurt him. Scabby Robe pulled out his arrow and shot the Snake down. He grabbed him by the hair and dived with him, pretending to dive downstream, but he made a circle and dived backwards. Everyone ran down east. When they looked around, Scabby Robe and his friend were way up there and they'd pulled the Snake out. They already had his scalp and they'd divided it between them.

Scabby Robe's Power was from water. The Beaver Father and Mother gave him all that Power in the little Stick.

The Warriors started for home with the guns and things they'd taken on their raids. Soon rumors came to the camp that they were coming back, with Scabby Robe right in the lead. Well, this Chief knew that his younger wife was going with Scabby Robe. She'd gone down to the river bed after wood and she was picking the dried up rosebud berries that grow on the sides of the bank.

The other wife, her older sister, came down and

told her, "You'd better come home. The warrior's are coming back and Scabby Robe is way in the lead. They'll be here any time." The younger girl was going to dress just like Scabby Robe and be there to greet him. That showed in public that he was her sweetheart.

As the warriors came in, the people sang for them. Scabby Robe had a horse and all kinds of property he'd gotten on his war raid. And he had that scalp with the great long hair.

He rode up and told his partner, the woman's husband, "Here's a fine scalp, a gun and a horse. All this is yours."

The man said to him, "I know, Scabby Robe. I've known all this time that it was going on. Well, here's your wife. This teepee they just finished making is yours, for you and your wife. My wife and I will move out."

That's how Scabby Robe paid for his wife.

HOW THE MEDICINE LODGE CAME ABOUT

There was always a big summer encampment of Indians. One nice warm evening three girls, they were all unmarried, were all lying in a row outside their folks' teepee. They were alone out there and they were talking about different things, you know. The second oldest one looked up into the sky and saw this real bright star.

She told her sister, "Do you see that bright star way up in the sky? If he were a man, I think I'd marry him." The oldest and the youngest ones didn't say anything. All of them got up and went in to bed.

In those days the women had to get wood. The men never bothered with wood or water. The next morning the sisters all had to go down to the creek to get wood, they would pack it to camp on their backs. The three of them had rawhide ropes. The older sister gathered her wood and tied it up. She was all ready to go. The second one started to gather her wood but her rope kept breaking. The youngest one got hers all ready. She and the oldest stopped and waited a couple of times but the second girl's rope kept breaking.

Finally they told her, "We'll go on slow so you can get your wood tied up." While she was fixing it she noticed a handsome young man was standing by her.

She said, "What do you want?"

He told her, "You remember last night, when you and your sisters were lying out on the grass? I'm that bright shining Star. You said that if I was a young man you'd marry me, so I came down after you."

She remembered. She didn't hesitate.

He told her, "Close your eyes." So she closed them and he took her on a Spider Web. He said, "Wait, I'll tell you when to look." They'd been gone quite a while and finally he said, "Take a look."

She could feel she had landed on something. She looked and oh, she was in a most beautiful place with all kinds of flowers and a beautiful land.

He told her, "This is my teepee. You see this place. It has all kinds of fruit and lots of different roots you can go around and pick to eat. But there's one, this Indian Turnip," he showed it to her, "don't bother it. Never bother it."

She was there for over a year and had a little boy. Whenever she went to pick berries or gather the different kinds of roots, she packed her little boy on her back. Her husband went out hunting all the time to bring in meat. There were no other families and she got lonesome.

One day she got to thinking, 'I wonder what's in that Indian Turnip he doesn't want me to take and dig up. I wonder what would happen.' So she put her baby on her back and she went out for a walk. She walked on and on until finally she came to this Indian Turnip. It was a great big round thing. She had a digging stick. She thought about it for a while and finally she started to dig. She kept digging and digging until she dug it all around and then she pulled it out. It left a great big Hole.

When she looked down she could see the encampment where her folks and her whole tribe were gathered. Oh, she felt bad and she started to cry. After a while she put the Turnip back in the Hole. It was about time for her husband to come back, so she went back to her teepee. When he came back he noticed. He told her, "You've been crying. Did you dig up that Turnip?"

She said, "I had to see what would happen so I dug the Turnip. I saw the encampment and it made me lonesome."

He told her, "Well, I'll take you back home. Get ready." She took her baby and put him on her back and she took the Digging Stick. He sent her back down on a long string of Rawhide Ropes, all tied together.

A little orphan boy was playing around outside. He could see someone coming down on that rope and the rest of the people couldn't see. He told the woman who took care of him, "Na a (mother), look at that thing, there's something coming out of that black thing."

The other kids made fun of him. They said, "Oh, it's your gummy eyes, there's nothing coming down."

But sure enough, the woman was coming down. She had all buckskin clothes on and she had her baby on her back. Her folks took her back in and she started the Medicine Lodge Offerings. The Medicine Woman who makes the offering comes out of the teepee when they're going to erect the Medicine Lodge. She comes out in buckskin clothes and she has the Digging Stick, with the hoofs hanging from it. Those Rawhide Ropes she came down on are used to tie the Medicine Lodge together.

HOW A WARRIOR LIT HIS PIPE FROM THE SUN

Two tribes had a big battle and when it was over this Pikuni man's wife came up missing. He went around and inquired for her; he thought she'd gotten killed. In those days, if they got a chance, the tribes would kidnap a woman from a different tribe. In the end he found out his wife had been kidnapped. They had a little boy and that little boy just cried and cried for his mother. They tried to do everything for him, but no, he wanted his mother. So his father felt bad.

He told his parents, "I'm going to hunt for my wife and bring her back. I feel sorry for my little boy." So he struck out and traveled for many days and many nights.

Finally toward evening he came to an encampment near a river. He could see the lights of the fires of teepees all around. So he stayed in the brush that night.

The next morning he hid in the brush by a spring where the encampment got drinking water. He watched every woman and child that came to that creek to get a bucket of water. Finally in the afternoon he saw a woman coming down and it was his wife. Oh, he was glad to see her and he jumped down after her. He ran over and kissed her and hugged her.

He told her, "I've come a long ways to bring you back home. Our little boy is just sick from being lonesome. We did everything for him but he wants his mama. If you have any love for your little boy, you'll come back with me."

So she told him, "You stay here. I've got a few little belongings at the teepee. I'll go and gather them up and when I come back, we'll leave." So he sneaked off and sat there waiting for her.

She left her bucket of water there, she didn't even take it home. She ran just a'screaming and started to act like she was out of her head. She threw herself at the lodge, just a'biting herself and pulling at her hair. That new husband of hers couldn't make out

what had taken her. All she'd say was, "Man, Man!" And point to the brush.

So he picked a couple of men and told them, "Go down there and find out what's happening." They went down and they saw this man sitting in the brush. They brought him back. It was her husband.

When she saw him she started to faint every few minutes. She'd faint and go plumb out of her head. She was just pretending. Finally she was quieted down and they brought him in and sat him down.

Her new husband wanted to find out what this man wanted. He made signs and asked him.

The man said, in signs and in Pikuni, "I didn't come over here to do any kind of harm. I have no weapons. I just want to take my wife back home. We've got a little boy and he's sick. He wants his mama back."

Then she'd interpret for him. Her new husband had a great big pipe they'd been smoking. "Oh," she said, "He wants you to take those ashes and dump them on his head." They emptied that pipe on him and the ashes made blisters on his head. Every time her new husband would ask her to interpret anything, she'd tell him to empty that pipe on him. Pretty soon he had blisters all around his head and on his chest and back.

Her husband told her, "You have no pity for our baby and no love for me."

He wouldn't eat and he wouldn't drink for three days. On the fourth day he told his host, in signs, "Partner, this is going on the fifth day I've been here. I guess my wife doesn't care to go back. I'll leave it up to you, I'll give you my life. Do whatever you want to. If you want to kill me or let me go back to my baby, it's all right. There's just one favor I want to ask you and that is to fill your pipe. Let me have a smoke."

So the new husband fixed up his pipe. His teepee was crowded with men and with some younger people.

They all wanted to see what was going on. They stripped the man until he just had on an apron. No moccasins. And those burns were on his chest, on his back and on his head.

He made a sign to go outside. It was a real clear day. He made a motion for all those people to sit down in a circle. He signed, "We'll smoke." He turned the Pipe four times, to the Four Directions and then he turned it to the Sun, saying his Prayers. He asked the Great Spirit, the Sun, to help him, to show the Power he was given by the Sun. He started to puff on the Pipe and the Pipe smoked. The Sun lit his Pipe. It smoked well and he passed it around. When it was gone he emptied the ashes into the earth. The new husband got scared.

He signed to him, "My partner, my friend, you have more Power than I have. There's nobody in this crowd that can light his Pipe with the Sun. So I'm going to give you two head of horses to take with you." One horse was for him to ride and they packed the other one with property. They gave him his clothing.

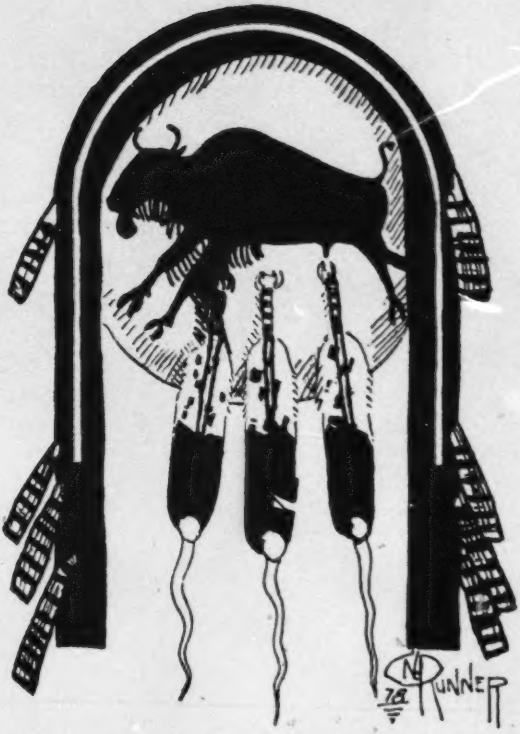
He signed to the new husband, "You can keep her." He said to his wife, "I'm going home now and I'm not taking you back. But some day we're going to meet again." So he pulled out.

Finally he got home and his folks were very glad to see him, for in those days it was very dangerous and he could have been killed on the way. He came back safely, but he still had blisters all over him. He told his family what had happened.

About two years later that same tribe came back again into Pikuni country. The two tribes met and mixed together. His wife had her nerve, when she came into the encampment, the first thing she did was start to hunt for her husband's teepee. She found it. Oh, she was happy. She tried to kiss him.

He pushed her away and told her, "No, don't come near me." She had three brothers and her

brothers felt bad at what she'd done. They came out with their knives and they butchered her alive.



CALF COAT

One winter an epidemic hit the Kainai (Blood) Indians and they died just like flies. It was a warning to them. They went on war parties the next summer.

First one party started out, the second one was going to meet them later on. Old Jim White Calf, Lone Pine, Calf Coat and Comes At Night were all in the second party. They traveled for about a week and got near Elk River (the Yellowstone River). They came up on the first party and those people thought they were enemies, so they started to shoot. Calf Coat got hit on the big part of his leg. His bone wasn't broken but it was a bad flesh wound. Then they found out they were all Pikuni (Piegan Blackfeet) and Kainai and they mixed up with each other.

But that first party didn't pay much attention to the second party with the wounded man. They just kept going south. The second party had to pack Calf Coat. He could hardly walk on his wounded leg. It was slow and they were all getting tired, having to carry him. They came to a river and the men told him, "We're tired. We hate to leave you but we've got to do something."

He told them, "That's all right. I'm suffering as it is. Just do what you want to do."

It was getting toward fall, so they fixed up a real solid teepee. They gathered up some of that high wild grass that grows in sloughs and fixed it up like a mattress. They put a buffalo robe on it for his bed. The men worked like women when they were on war parties because their wives weren't along to take care of them. These men killed a couple of buffalo and cut up and dried all the meat. They brought the dried meat into the teepee and piled it up near Calf Coat's bed so he could just reach for it. Then they left him.

Calf Coat lay there one late afternoon, toward evening, and he could hear the leaves starting to fall. He could hear footsteps coming on those leaves and

he wondered what it was. When it got to the door, it stopped.

"Come right in," he said to it, "My friend, my brother, or whoever you are, come in if you're a person or if you're an animal. I'm all crippled up, I can't walk, so just come right in."

It took quite a while. The door lap was open a little and finally this Coyote stuck his head in.

"Oh, there you are, brother," Calf Coat said to him. "Oh, I'm glad to see you. If you're hungry, just come right in and help yourself. There's some dried meat right here. If there's any way you can help me, I'd sure appreciate it. I'd be very thankful. But if you want to do away with me — either way it's all right. I'm just lying here suffering day and night. I can't walk."

So that Coyote crawled in and crept up to where that dried meat was and took a couple of pieces and went back out. He came back in for a second helping. You know how greedy coyotes are. He came back and crawled to where that man was lying. Oh, his leg was in a bad way. You'll notice how if a dog gets cut or hurt, he'll lick his sores and they'll heal. That Coyote crawled up to Calf Coat and whined. He started to lick the wound, all that crusty part around it, until the blood started to come. He even drank that blood. When he got through he pulled out.

Calf Coat put in a good night, he slept. The next morning the Coyote came at the same time and took care of him. Within a week's time he could move his leg. Finally that sore looked like it was healing. Then for a couple of days the Coyote didn't come. Calf Coat wondered why. He heard footsteps coming to the door again.

He thought, 'That must be my friend again.' But it was a Black Bear that poked his nose in the doorway.

"Oh!" Calf Coat said, "Am I ever glad to see you, my brother, my friend. Come right in. I'm not

able to get up but I've got some dried meat. Just help yourself." He told him the same things as before. "If you've come to help me, I'll sure be thankful. If you've come to do away with my life, it'll be the same. I'm only suffering, day and night."

That Old Bear grabbed some dried meat and left. He came back in. Calf Coat's face looked like he had paint on the front of his forehead. The Bear came in. He crawled up to Calf Coat and grabbed him and threw him almost out of his teepee. He knocked him out. When he came to, the Bear was standing on top of him, licking his face. The Bear's breath was just COLD! When he finished, Calf Coat could get up and he could crawl.

The Bear came and took care of him for about a week. By that time the wound on his leg was just about healed.

The Coyote came for the last time. Calf Coat's leg was all right but he was thin, awfully thin. He had two partners, the Coyote and the Bear.

He told them, "Well friends, since I'm able to walk now, I think I'll look for my tribe, to see where they are." He told the Coyote, "We're all going to strike out. You see that ridge over there? You go up and travel back and forth on that ridge. If you see any people traveling or any kind of animals, go back and forth four times. We'll wait here for you. If you don't see anything, just go twice."

So he and the old Black Bear waited. He made some dried meat into pemmican and they had some of it. They watched that Coyote. He went up west and went along the ridge a ways. He made two trips and didn't see anything at all. So he came back down and they started out.

Calf Coat was awfully weak. They couldn't go too far before they'd have to rest. Finally they came to a long valley and traveled along it. Then they came up a small hill, like a butte. War parties would often go half ways up a hill and peep over, looking out for

their enemies. When Calf Coat and his friends came up this hill and looked over, they could see smoke coming up from an encampment.

Calf Coat said, "There are my people." They came over the end of a ridge on that hill and found some real thick willow brush. They never traveled during the day time; they always waited till night.

They were all tired. He told his friends, "After it gets dark I'll go down and look for my people, but you two just stay here." So what little meat was left, they ate.

The Coyote and the Bear stayed there and Calf Coat went down after it got dark. He had a cane. He looked in the teepees. Finally he found his mother and father and he walked in.

"Oh!" They both just cried and cried over him, he looked so pitiful, he looked so thin. They gave him a bed and he went to sleep.

The next morning he told his dad, "You see that thick bunch of brush, those willows way up there? Don't let anybody go over there. Don't bother around it, I've got some friends up there who brought me home."

His father must have understood because he told his wife, "Make some food. We'll take some food up there and feed them."

So the Coyote and the Bear stayed up there for three days with Calf Coat. The fourth day, when he went up there they were gone.

CHILDREN IN THE WILDERNESS

One day the children took their brothers and sisters up a big hill from their encampment. The children were playing and they were gone for half of the day. Finally one of the Chiefs' daughters came running, just a'screaming. Her folks didn't know what had happened to her and they asked what was wrong.

She told them, "While we were playing, my necklace with the shells on it broke. The string broke and the shells fell off and all those children just took and grabbed them."

Her father got mad. He got his crier and told him to tell the people to break camp and for nobody to go over to get any of their children. He wanted them to leave all of them. If anybody was to go after them, he was ready to shoot them down. Of course, he was a Chief. Oh, the people felt bad, but what could they do? They had to obey his orders. So they broke camp. They were traveling by travois and horseback. They moved and he stayed in the back to see that everybody moved. There was not one left.

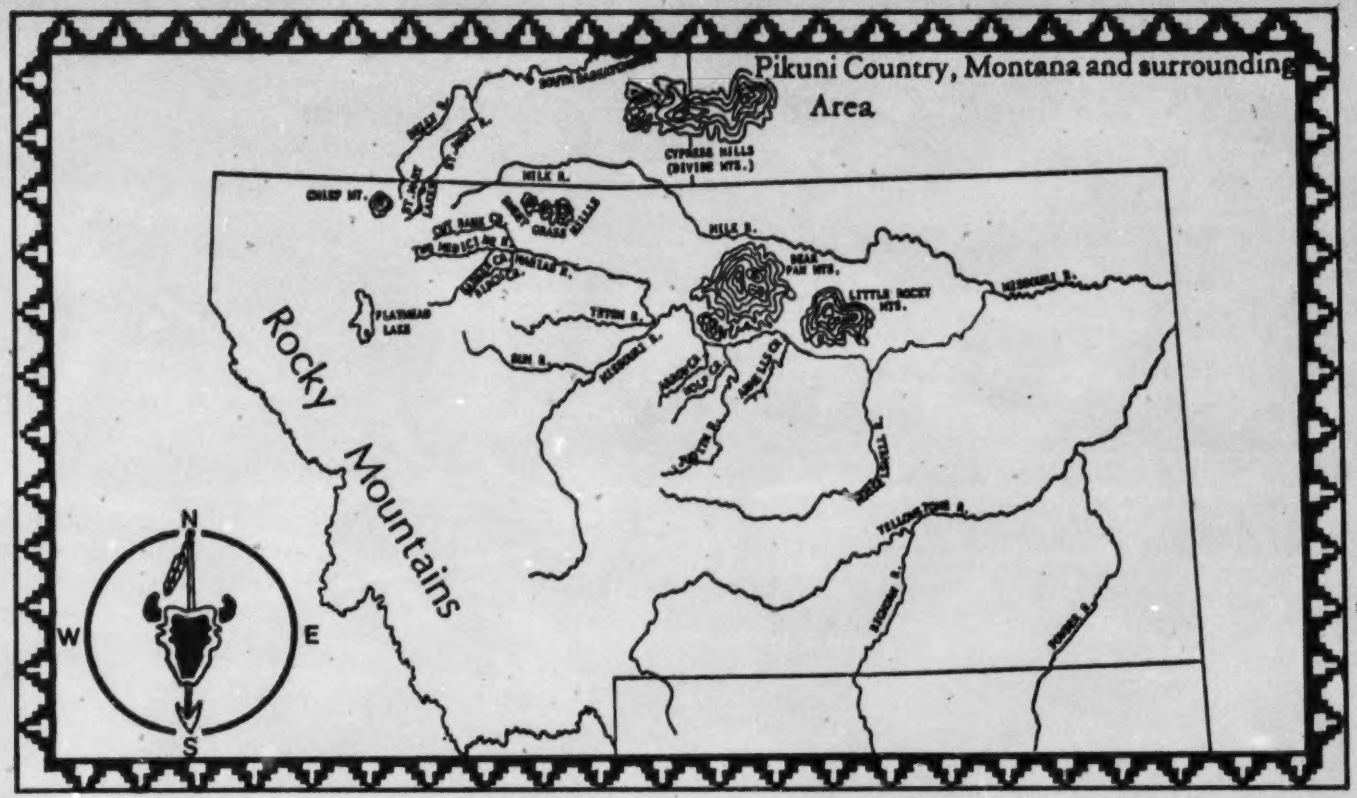
It got to be dusk and when the children came home there were no teepees. They didn't know what to make of it. They all started to cry and they walked around and around where their folks' camping places were, looking for anything they could find that belonged to their mothers. One little girl found one of those rocks you use to mash cherries.

She said, "Na a yo (mother), here is your berry masher." It looked like a war club.

Another little girl found another masher. "Na a yo, here is your pemmican masher."

The children started out in the direction they thought their parents had gone. They came to a hill close to a big river. They kept hollering for their mothers.

The first thing they heard was, "Oh, saksi pohsa-


Pikuni Country, Montana and surrounding Area
Rocky Mountains
CYPRESS HILLS (DIVIDE MTS.)
CHIEF MT.
MILK R.
GRASS HILLS
BEAR PAW MTS.
LITTLE ROCKY MTS.
FLATHEAD LAKE
TETON R.
MUSSELSHELL R.
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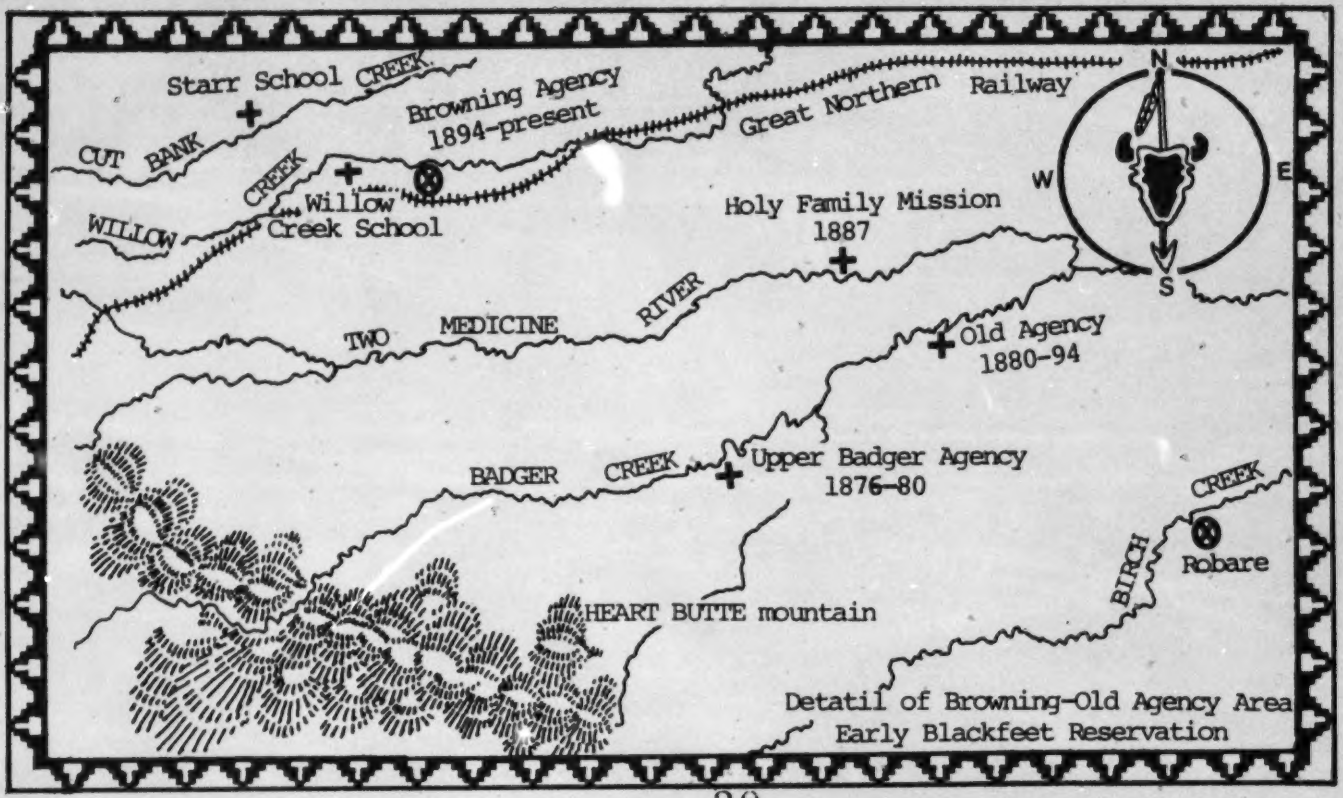
Starr School
CREEK
Browning Agency
1894-present
Great Northern Railway
CUT BANK
CREEK
Willow
Creek School
WILLOW
Holy Family Mission
1887
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Old Agency
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BADGER CREEK
Upper Badger Agency
1876-80
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BIRCH
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HEART BUTTE mountain
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Early Blackfeet Reservation

pot." (Come over this way.) They saw a big lodge in the valley. It belonged to this old woman.

"Oh, I'm glad to see you, my children," she said. "Come on all, come on in." When they got there they saw a great big fireplace. One girl had her little brother and she wouldn't take him off her back. They all came in, they were tired.

The old woman told them, "Don't put your heads against the teepee, there're a lot of mice. You should all put your heads toward the fireplace." So they slept like that.

The little girl said to her brother, "I'm scared of that old woman. You watch her now, see what she's going to do." So they watched her. She had a big knife and she started to cut those little ones' heads off. She put them in the pot.

The girl told him, "Just bite my ear when she gets close to us." When there was just one more before the woman came to them, her little brother bit her ear.

She sat up and told that old woman, "Oh, have pity on me and my little brother. We'll live with you. We'll do anything you want us to do. We'll work for you."

The old woman said to her, "All right." First thing, she told her, "You better go down and get a bucket of water. Take and leave your brother here."

The girl told her, "Oh, Na a (mama), my little brother's awful dirty. He's liable to mess on you. I'll just take him along, he's no trouble."

She said, "All right."

So the girl took the bucket and went down. The water was quite a ways and she went down. When she came to it, the water was dark green and blue. She saw an animal in it, a Water Buffalo.

She said to him, "Have pity on me and my little brother. Would you save us? Our parents deserted all

of us children. We came to this big teepee just a little ways from here and that old witch killed all the rest of the children. There's just me and my brother."

He told her, "Look in my head, in the fur."

So she looked and she saw big black bugs. Her little brother had some beads around his neck and she cracked one and said, "Oh, your bugs taste good."

The Buffalo told her, "Nopa awa." (On my back.) She got on and they started across. Just when they got past the middle of the creek, she looked back and saw the old lady.

The woman yelled out, "Ah yi! No one's going to save you. Even that thing you're riding, he's not going to save you. Just let me get a'hold of you! Boy, am I going to have a tender dish!"

He said, "Estsibigana (sideways, back and forth), estsibigana, estsibigana." He got to the other side and they got off. He swam back across and put his head on the bank, just the way it was before. She took her knife and hit him on the head.

"You old nasty thing," she said. "You just ruined my dish. I was going to have a tender dish of that baby on her back. What did you want to let them go for? Now I want you to take me across before they get out of my sight."

He said, "All right, but look in my head."

So she started to look. She picked a bug and cracked it and said, "Oh!" and she just spit and spit. "Oh, you've got dirty, nasty bugs!"

"All right," he said and she got on.

"Estsibigana, estsibigana." When he got to the middle of the river he just turned over. A few minutes later the fish and animals were swimming around eating her guts. He killed her.

The girl kept walking, with her little brother on her back. Every once in a while they'd stand and listen to see if they could hear any sound at all. They

traveled for four days and four nights and huddled up any place they could, to sleep. They didn't have anything to eat but berries and roots. The fourth day they came to an encampment place where the people had just moved away. The coals in the fireplaces were warm yet.

They didn't go too far from there before they found the camp. She hunted for her father's and mother's teepee and found it. Instead of greeting them, her father sent word to the Chief, "Our girl and boy are here, those that we left."

So the crier went out, "Everyone break camp. Nobody stay back." The people took the girl and her brother and tied them to the Center Pole of the Medicine Lodge with their backs together.

There was an old lady in the camp with a dog named Soi'sksi (Fly). She tied some pemmican around his neck good and tight and told him, "Soi'sksi, I want you to go way out in the woods where you can't hear anybody, where we can't hear you. I want you to just stay there. Don't move. I'll take and I'll threaten you, but don't move. After a while, when you think everyone's gone, you go back and chew those children loose." So he struck out into the woods.

The old woman packed up and called her dog and called him. That Chief came along and said, "Why are you so slow about moving?"

She told him, "My dog disappeared. He came up missing last night and he didn't come home this morning."

"Get busy," he said, "We'll help you along."

Finally the place was quiet. There weren't any animals around at all. All the people were gone. Old Soi'sksi came out and stood in the brush and looked around and listened. There was nobody around so he came out and started to chew the ropes. He chewed through the little boy's ropes. He got up and untied his sister. They ate the pemmican.

Well, from then on the children just stayed. They didn't care to look for their people anymore. They gathered up rawhide and made a little teepee and lived there. The girl fixed up a little bow and arrows and her little brother killed birds and jackrabbits for them to eat.

Pretty soon the boy was a grown young man. He got out and hunted and she fixed their dry meats. Finally they heard that their people were starving.

He told his sister, "I'm going to go and hunt tomorrow. The meat I bring, I want you to put it in all those teepee places where our people were camped. Don't put any meat in the place where our mother and father were camped, but cut two pieces of the gristle part of the leg. I want you to hang them in the fireplace and roast them. Take some of that fat and hang it over the fireplace too, so it'll heat up and melt."

So he hunted and brought the meat. He told her, "I'm going to look for Soi'sksi, the dog. I'll bring him something to eat. If I'm not back in four days, you'll be sure to know something has happened to me. If I'm back by the fourth day, everything is all right." She started fixing up a lot of pemmican and dry meat and the young man took his bow and arrows and struck out.

He kept traveling and traveling. The third day he could finally smell smoke and he discovered the camps. He stayed in the brush all afternoon, watching what people were doing. That night he went to look for the old lady that had the dog whose name was Soi'sksi.

Old Soi'sksi, he was just about to give up. He was starving, sitting by the fire. He'd start to go to sleep and fall over.

The young man called him, real soft, "Soi'sksi, moyikakiso." (Here's something to eat.) Soi'sksi would look up and listen around.

The old lady told him, "Ah, go back to sleep. You're dreaming."

For quite a while he heard, "Soi'sksi, moyikakiso," and finally he jumped through the door and just knocked the boy over. So they came in. Oh, that old lady was glad to see the boy. He took his pack off and the dog really had a picnic.

The boy told the old lady, "You get that crier and get him to tell them all to go back to that camp where they left us. They all should camp in the same places." He started back.

He got home on the fourth night and asked his sister, "Did you fix the meat?"

She told him, "Yes."

So their people came. They all fixed their teepees and there was meat in every place except their parents' place. They came running down.

"Oh, my boy!" his mother cried.

"Don't come near me, don't touch me," he told her. "But I want you to lick that fat and gristle hanging in the fireplace." He had those two hard gristle muscles roasting. When his mother started to lick that fat, down she went. He told his father the same thing. He killed his father and mother. They had no pity for their children.

The boy told the old lady who saved them, "You move into my father's and mother's teepee. It's all yours. And bring Soi'sksi." So Soi'sksi was a chief.

INISKIM, THE BUFFALO ROCKS

It was the middle of winter in the days before the Pikuni had horses. They were camped down by a creek for the winter and the people were starving. The buffalo had moved out somewhere. The men would go out and hunt but there were no buffalo any place. In camp they cleaned out everything they could think of to eat. Finally they even started to cook those little calf skins they used to dry berries in. They had to cook them for the good that was in them. They boiled some of their rawhide ropes for food. There weren't even any birds or rabbits left.

The Chief had two wives. The youngest one took her rope down to the creek to get wood. She was looking for some of those dried up rosebuds too. She was gathering up her wood and looking for those dried up rosebuds when all at once she heard some one singing.

Woman over there,
you, woman,
take me, I am holy.

I want a gift,
may I have kidney to eat.

There was nobody there but her.

Woman over there,
you, woman,
take me, I am holy.

I want a gift,
may I have kidney to eat.

She stood there but she couldn't see anything. Finally she saw the gravel and rocks rolling down on the side of the cliff on the bank. She went over there and found this Iniskim, a buffalo rock. It's a petrified rock shaped like a buffalo.

The woman picked it up and kissed it and said, "You must be the one who's singing. Sure I'll take you, I'll take you home with me." She put it in her dress and got her wood all ready and went home.

When she got to her teepee, she told her husband, "I want you folks to straighten up the teepee, straighten it up good. Invite all the elder men, the Medicine Men and the young men. We're going to make Medicine." She showed him the Iniskim and said, "I feel sorry for the little ones and the older people. They're starving. We'll see if we have the good luck to get our buffalo herd back again."

Her husband said to her sister, "Do as she says, she might have a miracle."

In those days they had buffalo jumps. They were always ready in case the buffalo would come near the camp.

So her husband and her sister got busy and they straightened their teepee all up. She asked them, "Could you give me some sacred paint and some buffalo fur and sweetgrass?" She made a nest of fur and put the Iniskim in it.

All the old Medicine Men came in. They used their rattles and sang that song.

Woman over there,
you, woman,
take me, I am holy.

I want a gift,
may I have kidney to eat.

About midnight the wind came up and a blizzard started. It was like ashes outside, you couldn't see a thing. And here the buffalo came, they went straight to that buffalo jump and the leaders just kept going.

In the morning it was just CLEAR outside. The people went down to the jump and there were piles and piles of buffalo. She saved her people. The Iniskim are kept in little Buffalo Bags with the Sacred Paint now. The Bags hang from the pillow rests in the teepee.

After that the woman became her husband's first

wife because of the Medicine she made. Her older sister became the chore girl.

STORY OF BIRTH

When a woman was expecting a baby she would ride sidesaddle. If she started to get sick with her labor while the band was traveling, her family and her husband's would stay back and start looking for a lake or a river. They'd make a shade out of two travois. The woman would have her baby in that shade. There was always a midwife, most of the women knew how to bring a baby into the world. Her mother or sister might be her midwife. They made teas from roots to ease the labor. They would wrap the placenta up in buckskin and put it in a tree where nothing would get at it.

When it was all over the woman would go out to the lake and she'd take a good bath or swim. Then she would put on a rawhide binding, like a soft belt, maybe ten inches wide. It had holes and laced up the back like a corset. That's what she would use to put her stomach muscles back in place and to protect them. She'd wear that for two or three months.

When it was over and she was ready again, they'd move along with the other camps.

The mother would leave the baby's cord on until it came off by itself. When it did come off she would save it. For a boy baby she made a little beaded piece of buckskin shaped like a snake to keep the cord in. The boy would wear it pinned on the back of his clothes as he grew older. If the baby was a girl she made the beaded piece in the shape of a turtle and the girl would wear it that same way.

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MARRIAGE

This is how a father would pick his future son-in-law. Suppose a man had three or four daughters who were all at the age when they should get married. He'd be spying on the young men who were old enough to get out and go to war or chase and kill buffalo. A man had to prove himself and be a good horse rustler and warrior or he wouldn't be chosen as a husband. The father would look for a good provider, a man who would give his daughters a steady home. Today girls choose for themselves, for what you call love. That love doesn't last long.

This man the father had found had to pay dearly for his wives, with many gifts. The young warrior would pay the father horses, teepees, scalps, guns and all sorts of possessions. If the father accepted gifts, that was it. They were married.

They would all live in the same teepee but the sisters weren't jealous of each other. Each girl, she had work of her own. The oldest one just took care of her husband. She took care of his clothes, his moccasins and everything he wore. She saw that it was all in perfect shape.

The second wife took care of the teepee. She straightened it all up and made up the beds. She took care of the robes and saw that all the pillow rests were in perfect shape and where they should be. It was just like a house that she took care of.

The third one was the cook. She took care of all the meals. She and the youngest wife were the ones who picked the berries and took care of the meat when it was brought it. The third and the youngest wife took care of everything in the line of food, the meat that had to be cut and dried, the berries that had to be picked and dried, and the roots that had to be dug.

When they got married the eldest one had to make a couple of pairs of fine moccasins for her husband's mother. That was a gift they would give their

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in-laws when their husband gave their father the horses and the different gifts.

The son-in-law never met his mother-in-law. If sometime he had to meet her, he had to give his best horse to his mother-in-law. That's how he'd meet her. It wasn't respectful for a man to talk to his mother-in-law.

If the wives ran around and the husbands wouldn't punish them, their brothers would punish them. They would kill them or cut off their noses or their ears. Not many women ran around, but the men, they ran around.

It was the same if a woman disgraced or deserted her family. Her husband or her brothers would kill her.

But sometimes if a woman had been running around, or if they just couldn't get along together, a man would gather up the people. He'd get a stick and he'd say, "This stick is my wife. Whoever catches it, she's his." And he'd throw it. The man who took it was her new husband.

WHITE DOG'S DEATH

Old White Dog was an Assiniboine and a rascal. He was sneaky and liked to go on raids by himself. He didn't like crowds. I met his sister when she was an old woman. She would always ask us what had really happened to her brother but no one would tell her.

That time it was getting toward spring and the Pikuni were corraling their horses along a creek. They'd cut out the brush where it was real thick and that's where they'd corral their horses at night.

White Dog always traveled at night. On war parties men generally took three or four pairs of moccasins, because they walked a long ways and wore their moccasins out fast. So White Dog opened up the gates along that creek and got some saddle horses. Meantime he lost a pair of moccasins.

The people knew from those moccasins that he was either Sioux or Assiniboine. So they saddled up what horses were left and tracked him, following their own horses' trail through Willow Creek and finally to Cutbank Creek, over near where Red Harper's place is now. White Dog had driven all those horses into a brushy place and had a fire made. He'd killed a little colt and he was going to cook his breakfast.

The party of Pikuni came up on him, behind him. He was wearing one of those white blanket coats with a hood on it. That's why he didn't see them. He always had his gun right along side of him but they didn't give him time. When he turned and looked, all of those riders were right there. He made for his gun, so Heavy Runner and Big Beaver shot him, both at the same time. We don't know exactly which one hit him. They broke his leg, so he couldn't do anything and he went down. By that time the whole crowd was there.

They all went for him and cut him up alive. While they were cutting him they could see the tears rolling down from his eyes. So they made a song for him.

White Dog, that one, he cried.
He cried, that one,
White Dog over there, he'd better cry!

Every one of them took parts of him. They tied his arms and legs and all the parts of him to their horses and dragged his body clean back to Old Agency.

The Old man said a bunch of them, kids all about the same age, was gathered around watching when the people came back to the stockade. They were all singing that song.

White Dog, that one, he cried.
He cried, that one,
White Dog over there, he'd better cry!

When the people got closer, the boys wanted to see what they were dragging. It was something black. When they got near they could see his foot and his toes.

The old man said, "We all ran over there and started to kick his foot."

They had a big Victory Dance. That's how they got rid of old White Dog.

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SPRING FLOOD

The Pikuni were well situated down on the Marias River for winter. They would move as far as they could down away from the wind and storm and stay there until spring was getting near. In those days the Pikuni were never caught in a flood. They always paid attention to the signs of the moon and the days and the nights. They always had warnings. Some real still night when there was no wind, they would hear the ice crack on that river. Then they knew it was time for them to move to a higher place, maybe those high hills over by Fisher Flat, where those teepee rings are. A week or ten days after they moved away, the river would break and the flood would come. The old man said the ice coming down looked like people or sometimes animals floating down that river. They were never caught in it. They moved higher.

WOLF PLUME'S LOVER

Wolf Plume was a beautiful, respected man. He was a great warrior, a great buffalo hunter. He never married but he fell in love with a married woman and they were lovers. He went with her for a long time.

That summer the tribe put up the Medicine Lodge down by the mouth of the Marias River. There's always a big opening on the east end as you come into the Medicine Lodge, so that people coming in and out can bring a horse or two head of horses. They can bring them into the circle. There were trees covered with green leaves around that opening, the trees that cover the Medicine Lodge. During the doings Wolf Plume and his lover were standing by the doorway talking. His face was always painted. He rubbed his face against one of those trees and his paint came off and was still on the tree.

After the Medicine Lodge was over Wolf Plume and some other men went on a war party. They all struck out and left. So it happened that in the fall of the year the news came back that Wolf Plume had gotten killed.

That woman felt bad. She didn't take pride in herself anymore, she just mourned a secret mourning for Wolf Plume, all that fall. Her husband knew what was going on, but he didn't mention anything. In the meantime the band started back to settle down for winter and they happened to choose that same place by the Marias. The Medicine Lodge was still standing, but all the leaves were falling off the trees around it.

She and her husband put up their teepee. They had no children.

Her husband told her, "I'll take the horses over there by that little hill and you can prepare some tea." In those days they drank peppermint tea or tea from the bark of the cherry bush.

Instead of building her fire to prepare some tea, she got her parfleches out. Parfleches were just like

suitcases. You packed all your clothes in them. She took all her clothes off and put on all her best beaded buckskin clothes, her leggings, her moccasins and her necklaces. She combed her hair and painted up her face.

Then she took a rawhide rope and went to where they'd stood during the Medicine Lodge. I can imagine how she felt when she saw that tree with his paint still on it. So she climbed up the Medicine Lodge. She got way up there where the Center Pole was and she sang.

It's so hard,
I'll never see Wolf Plume anymore.

Just then her husband came home. He saw that there was no fire or anything being prepared. All he saw was those parfleches, untied, and her best clothes gone. He inquired around, whether anyone had seen his wife. They told him no and at the same time he heard her voice singing. He looked up and his wife was sitting up at the top of the Medicine Lodge with that rope already around her neck.

He went over there and begged her, "Have pity on me if you love me. I'll never lay a hand on you. I know all that's been going on but I didn't want to hurt you or discourage you. He's gone now, just come down and we'll live the way we've always lived."

She didn't pay any attention, she just kept on singing. At the end of her song she jumped. Her husband couldn't quite touch her feet as she hung there. He ran home but when he got back up there with his knife, she was dead.

FRANK DOUBLE RUNNER

This happened in June of 1896. I was at Holy Family Mission and it was just before vacation. I used to interpret for the Indians who couldn't speak English. First thing, old Brocky came in to the Sister. He had on an old blanket coat and he was crying, so the Mother Superior called me. She brought the old man in to the sitting room where I was and he could hardly talk, the way he was crying.

She asked me, "What's wrong?"

So I asked him and he told me, "Tell her that my son-in-law, Paul Brocky, got killed this morning. Frank Double Runner killed him and stole my daughter. I'd like to have her ask the fathers if they could fix him up a casket." Old Brocky's son-in-law was named after him. Father Damiani and Father Prando were at the Mission then. The fathers had their own carpenter.

She told us to take him over to Father Damiani. I told the father, "Old Brocky here wants to know if you could help him out and fix a coffin for his son-in-law, who got killed. Frank Double Runner killed him."

There were three Double Runner boys. Ed and Paul were in school at the Mission and Frank was running around with old Brocky's daughter.

That Sunday morning Paul Brocky was on a great big Pinto he was breaking for a saddle horse. He came across Two Medicine River and started up the hill, it was a high cliff there. First thing you know, Frank Double Runner came out from the brush and shot him. His horse started to buck but he hung on for quite a while. Finally when they were pretty near the river, he fell off.

So Frank came across to that little log house. He was still on his horse and called her, "Come over here." Her daughter was Rose Big Beaver. Rosie was about five years old and she heard everything he told her mother.

He told her, "I took and killed your husband;

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he's across the creek there, and now I've come after you. If you love me you'll come with me. But if you love your husband more and you won't come, you'll never make another step from where you're standing." He was going to shoot her down. So Rosie, she just crawled way under the bed and lay there.

Her mother told him, "All right." She went to her trunk. She took out her beaded dress, her leggings, her moccasins and her neckwear. She put them all on and she took two fancy blankets. She got on and rode double with him over to old Double Runner's place, his folks' place. Frank hid her out in the brush.

He came in and he told his Dad, "You better go across to the Mission and get Eddie; get him excused. I want to wrangle the horses and make a roundup of the cattle." So the old man got busy and put on his coat and went across.

Meantime, while he was gone, Frank told his mother, "Take and fix up some lunch for us. Some dry meat and bread." He waited until old Double Runner came across with his boy, Eddie.

Frank told him, "I'm waiting for you. You have to gather up the horses and the cattle." And Eddie Double Runner didn't think anything about it. He just got on the back of that horse and they left. They went way up in the brush. Eddie was real surprised to see that woman sitting in the brush, there.

"I thought we were going to wrangle horses," he said to Frank. He was getting scared of his brother. So all three of them got on the horse and they pulled out. They came to those high cliffs north of the Mission, where they could hide the horse. Those cliffs were good to watch from, to watch people going to the Mission and up to town.

They stayed there for three days and Frank threatened to go down to the school and make a clean up.

Ed told him, "I don't think you should do that.

You've got that woman's husband dead and you've got her. That was all you were after. The children aren't harming you. You shouldn't do that."

So they stayed there. Finally they moved on up toward town and they landed near Willow Creek School, on those rolling hills. Mr. Matson, the Superintendent of the school, heard about them and every one was on the look out. The police all knew about them. "Watch out for Frank Double Runner, he shot Paul Brocky and took his wife. Ed Double Runner's with them."

That morning the three of them just had a few little scraps left to eat and I guess Eddie Double Runner was really hungry. He told his brother, "I'm awful hungry. I should go down and see if I can get some food."

So Frank told him, "All right, but you make sure and come right back."

Ed went down to the school. He went in and he didn't even bother about the food. "You see those two people sitting way up there along that hill?" he said, "That's my brother and that woman."

Mr. Matson told one of his men to go down to the Agency and report where they were. None of those policemen had the guts to go up there and arrest him. They were all scared of him.

Matson told Ed, "I think I'll go up and talk to your brother."

Eddie Double Runner said, "No, you're not going up there. He's really on a hot trail. You better not."

Matson said, "No, I'm going to go up." And he started out.

Frank Double Runner was the number one rifle shooter. He aimed at Matson and blew his hat off. Old Matson was damn glad to get back in the school. He didn't dare go out anymore. They all just stayed there and watched, until Double Runner and the

woman went down to the creek. They were gone for quite a while. All the policemen were on their horses and some other people were up from town. First thing you know, they heard a shot. He shot that woman. A few minutes after that, they heard another shot. The policemen were still scared to go over there. They say Dick Kipp was the first one who went up. When he got there they were both dead.

They made one great big rough box for both of them.

Mary Ground

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

During her lifetime Mary Ground, whose Indian name is Grass Woman, has experienced extreme changes in the life of the Blackfeet tribe, from the travois, and teepee days she remembers as a child through the change to the white man's style of house, the days when the reservation was a fenced compound patroled by the U.S. military, the decline in the use of the Blackfeet language and many ceremonials, and more recently, the resurgence of interest in Native American rights and traditions.

She was born near the Belly River on the Blood Reserve in Alberta, Canada and brought across the border into the United States on a travois as a small child. She was soon adopted by Kate Sherman's family and attended school at Holy Family Mission. She was married on August 12, 1899 to John Ground. Her marriage license states that she was sixteen. She lived on a ranch near Starr School with her husband for fifty-two years and gave birth to fourteen children. Active in both the Catholic Church and her Native American religion, she now lives in Browning, Montana.

ABOUT THE ILLUSTRATOR

Chuck No Runner, an Indian and western artist, is Mary Ground's grandson and lives in Browning, Montana.

GLOSSARY

Blackfeet Agency. Located in Browning, MT (referred to as "town" or "the Agency" in the stories) since 1894. Previous sites were on Badger Creek (called "Old Agency" in the stories) from 1880 to 1894 and on Upper Badger Creek (Upper Badger Agency) from 1876 to 1880. George Steel, who was the Agent in 1894, had found that the Old Agency site was dilapidated and had become inconvenient for many Blackfeet people, who had to travel long distances to receive their weekly rations. By that date many families had settled in the northern valleys of the reservation. The Browning site on Willow Creek was selected for its central location and its proximity to the new Great Northern Railway.

Holy Family Mission. Before 1887, the mission schools attended by Blackfeet children were south of Birch Creek, the reservation boundary established by the Executive Order of 1874. Considerable political trouble was caused by families taking their children across the creek and outside the reservation to attend Catholic schools. In 1887 Chief White Calf contributed land on the Two Medicine River to the Jesuits for a mission school for the Blackfeet inside their reservation. Holy Family Mission operated until 1939.

Kainai. The Blackfeet language name for the Blood tribe, the southernmost of the three Canadian tribes of the Blackfeet Confederacy. Kainai, the tribe's name for itself, translates "Many Chiefs." Early explorers in Kainai country traveled with Cree guides, whose name for the tribe means red people. The tribe made heavy use of red ochre paint, particularly during ceremonials. Because of the close similarity of the Cree words for red and blood, the explorers mistranslated the Cree name as Blood people.

Pikuni. The Blackfeet tribe's name for themselves in the Blackfeet language. The Pikuni are also called the Peigans in English, and are the southernmost tribe of the Blackfeet peoples. One popular story says that

Pikuni means poor robes, but the origin of the word is obscured by time.

Old Agency. See Blackfeet Agency. The area is still called Old Agency.

Willow Creek School. A government operated boarding school which opened in 1892.